

Communication Differences

Neurodiversity can present differences in communication styles and communication preferences.



Neurodivergent people can prefer to avoid small talk and eye contact.



Neurodivergent people can be literal, honest and direct communicators.



Neurodivergent people can have a need for clarity and specificity.

Try to

- Ask people what their communication preferences are
- Avoid idioms, acronyms, jargon, colloquialisms and metaphors
- Don't rely on facial expressions to communicate
- Don't judge people based on their ability to make eye contact
- Provide clear and succinct instructions

Information Processing

Neurodiversity can present differences in how people process information, and the speed at which they process information.



Neurodivergent people may process information slower or faster than neurotypical people.



Neurodivergent people may find it easier to process information if it is written down or is accompanied by visuals, for example.



Neurodivergent people may find it hard to decipher relevant from irrelevant information.

Try to

- Send information in advance of meetings, where possible
- After a verbal conversation, send an email with what has been discussed
- Use different communication formats such as diagrams, pictures, written and spoken words
- Allow time for people to process and respond

Attention & Focus

Neurodiversity can present differences in attention and focus including distraction-prone tendencies and hyperfocus.



Neurodivergent people can have distraction-prone tendencies with can be exacerbated by sensory demands.



Neurodivergent people can have the ability to hyperfocus in the right environment.



Neurodivergent people may need stimulation in order to stay focused on a task.

Try to

- Ensure people have the option to sit away from distractions in an office. For example, away from busy corridors or communal spaces
- Provide equipment such as noise cancelling headphones
- Suggest the pomodoro technique. Work for 25 minutes, followed by a short break. Manage the time with visual or sound timers.

Social Interaction

Neurodiversity can present differences in social interaction. This difference can cause challenges for neurodivergent people in social situations.



Neurodivergent people may struggle to understand neurotypical social norms and social cues.



Neurodivergent people can find social situations uncomfortable and anxiety-inducing which can impact rapport-building.



Both neurotypical people and neurodivergent people can support each other in understanding their differences socially.

Try to

- Provide clear information about company events and meetings so people know what to expect
- Ensure events such as work parties are not mandatory
- Ensure there is a virtual option available for all meetings
- Don't judge people based on a difference in social interaction

Sensory Differences

We all have differences in sensory processing (the way the body receives & interprets incoming stimuli through our senses). Our senses include taste, touch, smell, sound, sight, movement senses and interoception (internal body signals).



Neurodivergent people can be over or under sensitive to some sensory stimuli, meaning they are either overstimulated easily or need more than is typical of those senses.



Our sensory profiles enable us to understand what senses we need more of, and which we need less of, in order to stay regulated.

Try to

- Normalise movement breaks, including in long meetings
- Ask colleagues about the temperature and lighting before meetings start, and in the office
- Enable people to use focus tools
- Ensure there are quiet areas in the office and at events that people can go to, if needed

Organisational Skills & Executive Functioning

Neurodivergent people can experience differences in executive functioning such as time management and organisation.



Neurodivergent people can have challenges in organising and prioritising tasks, which can impact on deadlines.



Neurodivergent people can experience difficulties with time management, task completion, procrastination and planning.

Try to

- Support people to break tasks down into chunks and check in regularly
- Use mind mapping software
- Encourage colleagues to use time blocking techniques to allocate specific time for tasks
- Support colleagues to plan at the end of every day so they can start their work straight away the next day

Change Management & Flexibility

Neurodivergent people can experience difficulties processing and adjusting to change.



Neurodivergent people can find it challenging to adapt to new environments or ways of working, or even moving from one activity to the next.



Neurodivergent people can thrive in a routine-driven environment where any changes are clearly communicated.



Neurodivergent people can find it challenging to adapt to changes in the physical environment such as the layout of furniture.

Try to

- Share as much information in advance about any changes to routines, ways of working or the work environment. This could include marking it in someone's diary and including a timetable of the change, or sharing images and visual supports
- Minimise unnecessary change
- Make waiting times between meetings or tasks as short as possible, or include enjoyable activities during transition times